
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2011HLTH0091-001415
Nov. 4, 2011

Ministry of Health

Seniors' Fall Prevention Awareness Week

VICTORIA – Ensuring seniors in B.C. are supported to live healthy, independent lives is the focus of Senior's Fall Prevention Awareness week, Nov. 7-13.

Falls are the most common cause of injury among British Columbia seniors. Each year, one-in-three seniors over the age of 65 experiences at least one fall and nearly 40 per cent of fall-related hospitalizations involve a hip fracture. One out of every five seniors who suffer a hip fracture dies within a year. Injuries also frequently result in disability, chronic pain, loss of independence and a reduced quality of life.

The Province has a number of initiatives in place for seniors to learn about fall prevention. In June 2011, a multimedia training resource was introduced for physicians and other health professionals to educate seniors about ways to prevent falls and reduce their risk for injury. The information package includes a video and written resources designed to engage both seniors and doctors.

Other resources and initiatives include:

- Strategies and Actions for Independent Living (SAIL) Falls Prevention Project - a training program for community health workers and home health professionals that addresses falls and related risk factors among clients of publicly funded home support services. Health authorities are currently implementing SAIL and are expanding its scope across their regions.
- Framework and Toolkit for Fall Related Injury Prevention in Residential Care – resources for health-care professionals to support planning, implementation, distribution and evaluation of fall prevention programs in residential care.
- The Canadian Falls Prevention Curriculum – evidence-based training for health-care professionals on how to design, implement and evaluate a fall prevention program. As of autumn 2011, over 2,000 health-care providers and community leaders have received this training.

The Province also has numerous ways of getting information into the hands of seniors, including:

- Websites such as SeniorsBC.ca and the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility (hiphealth.ca/CEMFIA) provide information on prevention, causes, consequences and treatment of fall-related injuries.

- The SeniorsBC e-Newsletter is sent to over 1,400 people quarterly and provides information on government programs, profiles active seniors, and offers healthy eating recipes and active aging tips.
- Senior-focused publications like the BC Seniors Guide helps seniors live healthy and active lives.
- The Health and Seniors Information Line is available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday in B.C. (1 800-465-4911). Translation is available in over 130 languages.

Quote:

Michael de Jong, Minister of Health –

“One of our government’s highest priorities is ensuring seniors have the proper supports in place so they can be active and independent. The majority of falls are preventable so we want to provide as much information as possible to our seniors so they are educated about the risks and how to avoid falls and stay healthy.”

Quick Facts:

- There are approximately 12,000 fall-related hospitalizations in B.C. each year for seniors aged 65+.
- Seniors with fall-related injuries tend to stay in hospital twice as long as seniors hospitalized for all other reasons.
- Injuries from falls account for 85 percent of all injuries to seniors and cost the Province over \$195 million last year (2009-10) in direct health costs.

Learn More:

- Information on falls prevention can be found at: www.SeniorsBC.ca/stayingindependent
- Information on seniors: www.seniorsbc.ca.
- Fall prevention video: www.gpsc.bc.ca/psp-learning/clinical-management/videos-chronic-disease-management-cdm
- Fall prevention resources: <http://www.gpsc.bc.ca/psp-learning/chronic-disease-management/tools-resources>
- BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit: www.injuryresearch.bc.ca.
- Centre of Excellence on Mobility, Fall Prevention and Injury in Aging: www.hiphealth.ca/CEMFIA.

Contact: Ryan Jabs
Media Relations Manager
Ministry of Health
250 952-1887 (media line)

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: www.gov.bc.ca/connect